

Amendments to the Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended): ~~A new and automated approach or method (using computer programming techniques and related network hardware already within the art) to improve an organization's safety culture and, thus, operational safety by enhancing organizational communications up the chain of command, said method consisting specifically of a means of collecting and communicating issues and concerns from lower level workers and managers wherein all such issues or concerns may be~~ An automated method to improve an organization's safety culture by enhancing organizational communications, said method comprising:

a means of collecting and communicating issues and concerns from workers and managers wherein said communications are:

initiated by any worker or manager at any time, ~~allowing timely submittals;~~

specifically solicited or accepted for input on a case-basis or periodically;

submitted with or without originator anonymity;

submitted with or without the approval of other workers, managers, or supervisors; and

~~—processed for integration and aggregation by one or more computer software programs designed to manage such issues and concerns;~~

processed by one or more computer software programs and thereafter transmitted to senior managers, the public, or regulators.

~~—made available (such as through the use of databases and email) directly to or distributed to senior managers, the public, or regulators;~~

- communicated using either internal organizational or external non-organizational telecommunications paths; and
- further processed employing such automated means, computer systems, and telecommunications networks as may be needed for effective information collection, retention, and communication to improve organization safety culture, for organizational evaluations, and for stakeholder evaluations at the industry-level, for political division, or for geographical regions.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the computer software program or programs also include a means of peer-review and concurrence, thus increasing issue and concern validity and providing a means of reducing or avoiding reprisals against individual who heretofore (without the current invention) would be designated as “whistleblowers” whistleblowers, said peer reviews being accomplished by routine computer software means (essentially within the current state of the art) such as by use of:

- peer identification data fields such as names or employee numbers, or
- checkboxes or links to related prior or existing issues and concerns; or
- inclusion in databases and reports as separate means for screening for peer-review status[[],].
- automated means such as database searches using key words and software programs (normally server scripts or direct inputs of keywords by users) to provide online collaboration, including interactive peer review status prompting for the originator or for others such as the senior managers, the database manager, the regulator, or the public.

Claim 3 (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the computer software program or programs are also designed to aggregate, integrate, summarize, document,

~~produce, or otherwise develop and present such issues and concerns for a sub-organization, for an entire organization, for parent organizations, for an industry, or for a political entity or geographic region wherein~~

- ~~— a database of issues and claims is created,~~
- ~~— said database may be examined and mined for trends, and~~

~~economic, regulatory, operational, and safety related conclusions and decisions may be reached. wherein the mentioned computer software programs includes a means to present a summary of said issues and concerns for the organization, wherein said summary is examined and safety culture related conclusions reached by regulators and those persons having an economic interest in the organization, thus enabling an additional means external to the organization for enhancing the safety culture within the organization based on or resulting from the methods of the current invention.~~